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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

September 16, 2009

The Honorable Barack H. Obama
The President
The White House
Washington DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

The recent revelations surrounding former “green jobs czar” Van Jones’ affiliations with radical organizations -- including “9/11 Truth” and “Standing Together to Organize a Revolutionary Movement” (STORM) -- have made clear the need for increased transparency from the White House on its process for vetting presidential appointees and staff.

It is my understanding that while the FBI conducts background checks on all White House staff, the White House maintains ultimate authority over hiring decisions and the issuance of security clearances, regardless of any “red flags” or concerns reported by the FBI following an investigation. Further, because the “czars” are never required to participate in anything more than a standard SF-86 background check, the FBI is not tasked with investigating their association with organizations, such as the radical groups that Mr. Jones was affiliated with.

The American people have a right to know who is advising the president and whether they have been thoroughly vetted. I urge you to disclose the White House’s protocol for staff appointments and the standards it has set for appointments and the issuance of security clearances, including the consideration of organization affiliation or past criminal conduct.

I also urge you to provide much-needed transparency by disclosing whether the White House was aware of Van Jones’ affiliations with 9/11 conspiracy theorists and STORM, a noted communist organization. Finally, I ask that you report on the types of clearances that have been given to other White House “czars.”

Best wishes.

Sincerely,

Frank R. Wolf
Member of Congress